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# NORTHWEST MISSOURIAN

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020

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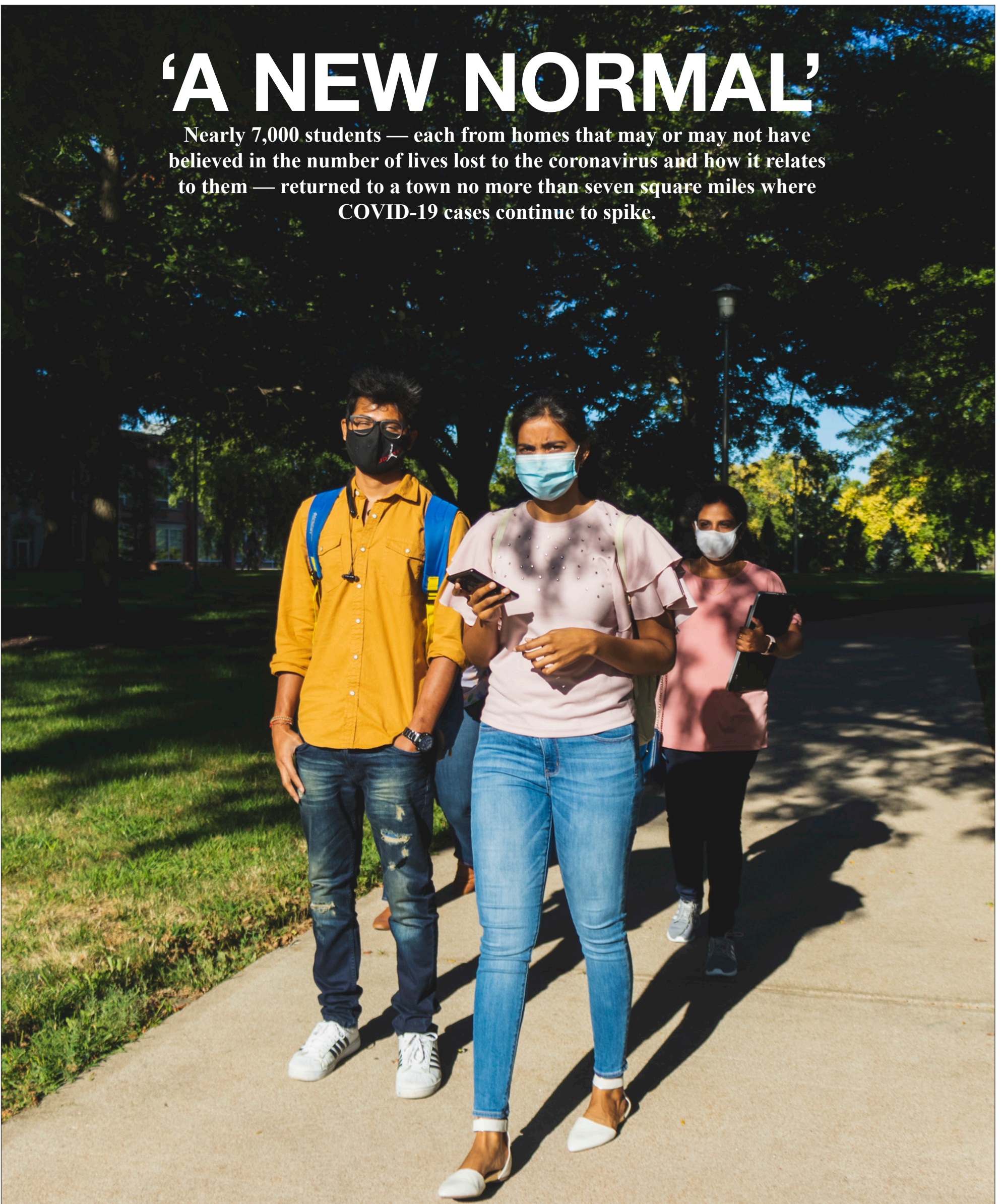
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## 'A NEW NORMAL'

Nearly 7,000 students — each from homes that may or may not have believed in the number of lives lost to the coronavirus and how it relates to them — returned to a town no more than seven square miles where COVID-19 cases continue to spike.



RACHEL ADAMSON | NW MISSOURIAN

Northwest resumed in-person classes Aug. 19 for the first time since March when the pandemic put a stop to normal life. Now, students face a new normal where face masks are required on campus.

KENDRICK CALFEE  
News Editor | [@calfee\\_kc](#)

“At least we have each other.”  
They didn’t know what to expect. It was something they had been anticipating for a while now — a fresh start and a new home. But the faint vision of what college is supposed to be remained so when they saw each other for the first time, when they wanted to hug their new honorary member of the family, but couldn’t.  
Freshman roommates Caitlin Thomas and Cassie Sherwood come from different walks of life, but both say they feel like they struck gold when Northwest paired them up to live together.  
Thomas lived near Omaha and attended a small Catholic high school. Sherwood is from Smithville, Missouri, a town 27 miles

from Kansas City. While they are studying in vastly different majors, their newfound friendship has kept them motivated for college life in the era of COVID-19.

## Two freshmen embrace college amid a pandemic

Sherwood, who is studying marine biology and wildlife, said she will remember her first day at Northwest as a socially distant, masked-up day of SOAR. She had known about her roommate, Thomas, who is studying criminology and criminal justice, for a while beforehand, when someone made a

residence hall floor group chat for everyone to get acquainted.  
“There’s the fact that college life in general is different, but you also have a pandemic going on, so it’s overall completely different than what I’m used to or what I thought it would be,” Thomas said.  
Part of that difference going forward is how classes will function. Online classes are somewhat new to Thomas and Sherwood, with what little experience they have coming after their respective high schools closed their doors for local COVID-19 precautions. They continued their classes online, finishing senior year of high school remotely, a trend most 2020 graduates across the world lived through.  
Northwest, though, is still working out kinks in modifying

their courses during the pandemic. Students are getting last-minute information from their professors who are receiving last-minute instruction from University officials.  
Mass emails were sent to students and staff of Northwest Aug. 5 and 6 from President John Jaskinski, Vice President of Student Affairs Matt Baker and Provost Jamie Hooymann depicting a first look at what life on campus would look like.  
Two recipients of those emails, Thomas and Sherwood, read reminders about social distancing and face covering requirements, the “new normal,” and the enactment of cleaning protocols in classrooms and frequently contacted areas.

SEE PANDEMIC | A4

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**Instructor Elizabeth Dimmitt goes around her abnormal psychology class creating a seating chart for the semester on the first day of classes Aug. 19. The University has asked that all professors create a seating chart to make contact tracing more efficient.**

RACHEL ADAMSON | NW MISSOURIAN

# Instructors on frontline for mitigation efforts

**MADELINE MAPES**  
News Reporter | @MadelineDMapes

An empty classroom has its desks spread out by at least 6 feet. Tape on the carpet marks where the desks should and shouldn't be. An instructor prepares to face only half of her class — because this year she isn't expected to just teach, she also has to mitigate a global pandemic.

Stancy Bond is an English comprehension instructor and writing center coordinator who, like the rest of the professors on Northwest's campus, had to rework the way she holds classes because of COVID-19.

After working at Missouri Western State University as an adjunct professor for one year, Bond began working at Northwest and has remained here for eight years.

"I feel good in our safety practices," Bond said.

Bond said she anticipated the University would still try to hold in-person classes. She serves on the school board for the Savannah school district where her son attended school, which

also aided her in anticipating how the University would handle this fall. She figured if other local school districts were holding in-person classes, so would the University.

Bond teaches a core composition class that every student who passes through the University must take — English Composition I. She said she is worried the lack of one-on-one contact with students because of coronavirus precautions will impact students' skills.

Bond said the Language, Literature and Writing Department Chair Robin Gallaher has been incredible about helping the professors physically prepare their classrooms. Gallaher has rearranged rooms for social distancing and has even gone as far as to put tape on the floor where every desk should be placed.

"My department chair has really bent over backwards ... so we don't have to worry about any of that," Bond said about Gallaher.

Many professors in the English department have decided to split their classes in half, which are typ-

ically about 25 students in a class. Bond plans to split her class so half of the class meets Mondays while the other half meets on Wednesdays. As for Fridays, Bond is debating on hosting a Zoom meeting on those days or some kind of instructional writing time.

"Students, this semester, are going to have to be a little bit more responsive to instruction," Bond said.

She compared this fall semester to a summer class she teaches. She said with an online summer class, students have to be more responsible and reliable to take care of their own work with little face-to-face meetings with a professor.

Despite the circumstances the coronavirus has created, Bond is glad the University will be resuming classes in person this fall.

Professor of natural sciences Kurt Haberyan is also excited for the fall semester to begin. He said he is anxious for the semester and the new challenges that come with holding in-person classes during the coronavirus pandemic.

After working at Troy University in Troy, Alabama, for five years, Haberyan started working at Northwest and is now going on his 26th

year with the University.

The only thing close to the problems COVID-19 has created in the 31 years he has been teaching was the rapid increase in technology usage over the years.

"That took 10 years to go full circle. This COVID thing is happening in just a matter of months," Haberyan said while giving a little chuckle.

Haberyan said a typical lower level class, such as general biology, can run anywhere from 60 to 80 students. Most of Haberyan's upper level classes usually hold about 20 to 25 students.

Many science professors have been asked to spray disinfectant between every class. Haberyan said there was talk of some of the professors in his department wearing face shields, but he hasn't heard anything else about the idea since.

Haberyan, like many professors in his department and in the English department as mentioned by Bond, are splitting their classes in half and having half of the class come on one day of classes and the other half come the next day of classes. Haberyan also plans to record his lectures and post them

online so students can watch the lectures that they don't get to be in person for.

"It does balance the learning between the two groups at the same time that it is a reasonable compromise between normal teaching and completely sheltered teaching," Haberyan said.

Faculty met Aug. 13 and 14, less than a week away from classes having their first session. Haberyan said faculty met with President John Jasinski who informed them of precautions and procedures to mitigate the coronavirus.

As far as the labs for science classes are concerned, Haberyan said professors are taking different approaches to conduct the labs and keep students safe on campus.

Haberyan teaches an ecology class that requires lab participation. He plans to separate the students into two groups. The first group would start at the original time, while the second group would start an hour and a half after the original start time.

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CRIME LOG for the week of Aug. 20

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department

Aug. 18 There was a closed investigation for two liquor law violations at Tower Suites West. There is an open investigation for forcible fondling at Tower Suites West.

Maryville Department of Public Safety

June 6 A summons was issued to Jackson D. Golightly, 21, for driving while intoxicated and failure to maintain the right half of the roadway on the 800 block of West Third Street.

June 30 There was a report of a lost or stolen wallet on the 2500 block of Aurora Avenue. There is an ongoing investigation for larceny on the 300 block of West 12th Street. A summons was issued to Dominic J. Grout, 26, of Burlington Junction, Missouri, for animal neglect on the 600 block of East Third Street.

July 1 There is an ongoing investigation for property damage on the 1900 block of East First Street.

July 2 A summons was issued to Ebony K. Haynes, 32, of Nashville, Tennessee, for driving while suspended and failure to maintain the right half of the roadway on the 2400 block of

South Main Street. There is an ongoing investigation for burglary on the 300 block of East Cooper Street. There is an ongoing investigation for larceny from a motor vehicle on the 600 block of North Vine Street. There is an ongoing investigation for larceny at Mazingo Lake. A summons was issued to Stormy R. Strough, 19, for larceny on the 1600 block of South Main Street.

July 3 There is an ongoing investigation for animal abandonment on the 800 block of South Depot Street.

July 4 There is an ongoing investigation for burglary at Mazingo Lake. There is an ongoing investigation for property damage at 1 Fall Drive. There was a report of a lost or stolen wallet on the 600 block of West Halsey Street.

July 10 There is an ongoing investigation for larceny on the 200 block of East Third Street. A summons was issued to John A. Linebarger Jr., 34, of St. Joseph, Missouri, and Gary J. Spire, 65, of Parnell, Missouri, for having an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle on the 1400 block of South Main Street.

July 11 A summons was issued to Alex L. Rinehart, 16, of Hatfield, Missouri, for driving while intoxicated and speeding on the 200 block of West Third Street. There is an ongoing investigation for a lost or stolen license plate on the 800 block

Faculty receives diversity training

SAMANTHA COLLISON News Reporter | @SammieCollison

In the midst of nationwide protests against police brutality, dozens of Northwest students and alumni took to Twitter and Facebook in June to share stories of being marginalized by faculty, residential life staff and students and demanded change from the administration and the Board of Regents.

Eight and a half weeks later, Associate Provost of Diversity and Inclusion Justin Mallett presented the first measure taken in response to the Board of Regents at its Aug. 7 meeting.

“In my strategies class for pre-calculus I was one of two hispanics in the class, the rest of the class was white. The entire semester two boys in my class constantly called me Chihuahua, instead of by my name. To this day, I am ashamed that I never spoke up. #ICantBreatheAtNWMSU,” @JenniferGtz28 tweeted June 5.

Another student, @bryana\_jones on Twitter, shared a story from an anonymous Black student who said they were ostracized by a University faculty member in class. Jones said she and other students in the class reported the behavior, but nothing became of it.

“#ICantBreatheAtNWMSU Here’s one of my experiences of being LGBTQ+ at NWMSU: I’m

transgender and I sent out an email to all of my professors stating that my name was different than on my record. Most of my professors accepted it. One kept calling me by my dead name and ‘He-She,’” @mamakat115 tweeted.

Mallett said social media posts like these were the catalyst for the University to require diversity training for all employees. He said as of Aug. 17, 82% of employees completed the online training.

The required training, Mallett said, covers base-level concepts, including becoming aware of bias and privilege. He emphasized that this training was a place to start for employees and supplemental training will become available soon covering topics like ethnocentrism, racial healing and colorism.

In addition to faculty and staff, the Board of Regents, Northwest Foundation Board and the Northwest Alumni Board are required to take the training.

Mallett said all feedback on the training so far has been positive.

“Understanding the definitions, understanding that it’s a level set, it’s not going to go into the deep, complex facets of systemic racism and institutional bias, to provide the basic concepts of ‘What is a microaggression?’ ‘What is discrimination?’” Mallett said. “Ev-

eryone’s been happy with the basic level set.”

Whether the training is successful, Mallett said, will be measured through the actions of employees. Whether a rise in reported incidents will be indicative of success or failure is complex, since Mallett said he hopes more students feel empowered to report discrimination and harrassment, but he also hopes there are fewer incidents that need to be reported.

82% Of employees completed the online training.

This training works in conjunction with the Bearcat Equity Initiative, which the Office of Title IX and Equity will launch later in August. The initiative will allow students an avenue to deal with incidents of discrimination and harrassment that are not shortly resolved.

Mallett said employees who don’t complete the training in a timely fashion will be subject to the employee disciplinary process.



Regan Thompson, a Northwest graduate student and GA for campus rec, sprays the campus’ “Bearcat Thunder” disinfectant spray onto the canoe paddles at the University Seminar activity on Colden Pond, Aug. 17. Northwest created the Bearcat Thunder spray as another protocol on campus to keep students safe.

Northwest continues aim for long-term in-person classes

KENDRICK CALFEE News Editor | @Calfree\_KC

MADELINE MAPES News Reporter | @MadelineDMapes

With new protocols and mitigation strategies in place for new and returning students, Northwest aims to keep classes in person for as long as possible.

Among other steps the University has taken to mitigate the spread, and preparing for the inevitable first case of COVID-19 on campus, Northwest converted North Complex into a student quarantine and isolation ward.

Jacob Wood, resident director of North and South Complex, worked with Rose Viau, assistant vice president of Student Affairs: Residential and Auxiliary Services, and the University to turn

part of North Complex into the quarantine and isolation unit for on-campus resident students if they were to be exposed to the virus or test positive.

Wood has worked in Residential Life at the University for four years and has never had to deal with a crisis of this proportion.

“Crisis is not new to our world (Residential Life), but this one is a little bit different and it has taken a little more preparation than what others take,” Wood said.

Crisis management, to Matt Baker, Vice President of Student Affairs, is a time in which the University can take advantage of the multiple aspects of a situation to guide decision making.

“There’s never a definition of ‘if this, then this,’” Baker said. “It’s al-

ways more about what are the impacts of whatever the crisis is.”

Following that stance, the University did not set a benchmark number of cases required for Northwest to have to move classes completely online.

Additionally, the University did not require students to present negative COVID-19 test results before arriving on campus, because mass asymptomatic testing is widely discouraged by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and other regional and local health officials.

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PANDEMIC  
 CONTINUED FROM A1

The expectation of self-monitoring for symptoms, information about course changes, campus dining modifications and a reminder to check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines as well as the Northwest FAQ’s page for coronavirus recovery were all key takeaways in the emails.

At the time, the University anticipated 44% of courses could have minor changes, meaning students would attend class in person with social distancing in place and wearing face masks, 35% could adopt an “alternate attendance model,” which means one day will be in person, the next day class would be remote, 10% could be completely online and about another 10% would adopt a combination of the previous methods.

But even two days before classes were set to begin, some instructors still had not sent emails to their students depicting what class would look like for the semester.

Hooyman said in one of the emails that while social gatherings are an important part of the college experience, they present additional dangers this year.

“By expecting your friends, neighbors and guests to wear face coverings and socially distance, you are helping Northwest provide in-person classes all semester,” Hooyman said.

After attending SOAR and Advantage Weekend in a completely new fashion, with limited large group activities and mediated online friend connections, Thomas and Sherwood said they see these changes for what they are but can’t disregard the opportunities that lie within them.

“I love learning,” Sherwood said. “I’m really excited to develop more of my passions.”

Sherwood is the youngest sibling in her family, with an older sister who already has a degree. Her entire immediate family came to drop her off, and with nervous hearts amid a global pandemic, wish her well in her first semester of college.

Her mom cried a lot that day,



Freshman Caitlin Thomas holds open the door at Garrett-Strong after walking her roommate freshman Cassie Sherwood to class Aug. 19. Thomas and Sherwood are a part of the incoming freshman class experiencing their first time at college in the middle of a global pandemic.

for more reasons than just to see her child taking a big step toward a fulfilling career and leaving her with an “empty nest” back home.

“Things will be good despite the craziness,” Sherwood said, looking intently across the library as if assuring her mom of it one last time.

Sherwood said she wants to be involved in green organizations and conservation efforts, as some of her biggest passions are wildlife, animals and how people can help them. She chose her major based on these reasons and said she wants to hone-in on these opportunities as early as possible.

She is even seeking out an on-campus job opportunity where she would attend to cattle at the R.T. Wright Farm.

Not as involved in high school as she would like to have been, Sherwood wants to use college

as a way to get out of her comfort zone.

“I’m trying to get hooked up with some clubs, hopefully finding things that I know are ‘me,’” Sherwood said.

With the logistics of campus organizations still somewhat unclear, making those on-campus connections has been difficult for Thomas and Sherwood.

During Advantage Weekend, the freshman class participated in a Playfair Zoom. The online video chat platform allowed for students to have ice-breaker conversations and activities that would ordinarily happen in-person.

Thomas noted the activities they could do online were fun, but she said she would have enjoyed it more if it were in-person.

“At least when online, you can see people’s smile,” Thomas said.

Thomas, who attended a small

high school, knew she wanted a smaller college atmosphere. She said Northwest was a good fit for it’s campus size, for the programs, and since she could make the two-hour drive home on the weekends if she needed to.

Like Sherwood, Thomas is closest to her mom. They are practically best friends. She said she has always been there for her through the good times and bad, with life lessons and tough love that helped her become who she is today.

When Thomas suffered a car accident the summer before her senior year of high school, she began to learn how to cope with unexpected damage. She said moving to college during a pandemic is a lot like dealing with an eight-month long concussion.

“I definitely know how to deal with struggles, and I faced struggles before coming here,” Thomas said. “But it seems like a lot of people are willing to help here, which is refreshing.”

Thomas said the biggest thing she was bummed out about starting college this fall was the postponement and cancellation of college sports. A huge fan of college football, she was looking forward to Bearcat home games this fall.

Until sports make a comeback though, Thomas said it will be nice to focus on her classes and passion for victim advocacy. She chose to pursue criminology and

criminal justice because she always wanted to help people.

“Within the criminal justice system, there are people, by the way they act and things they do, ... they just need someone there,” Thomas said. “I always wanted to be that, to let them know someone cares.”

Thomas plans to apply for an on-campus job with the University Police Department, possibly as a dispatcher or something related. She not only wants to help people after college but also get experience doing so as soon as possible.

As the University plans to continue in-person classes through the duration of the fall semester, up until right before what would ordinarily be Thanksgiving break, the state of Missouri continues to be a “Red Zone” for daily positive COVID-19 cases.

Nodaway County, where cases have grown exponentially over the past month, and where Northwest resides, is welcoming approximately 7,000 people into its county over the week of Aug. 17.

Sherwood and Thomas are two freshmen among thousands who are getting their first-year college experience amid a global pandemic and procedures known as the “new normal.” Appearing hopeful for what lies ahead, their confidence, nearly visibly, flows from one another.

“At least we have each other,” Thomas said.

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ANDREW WEGLEY | NW MISSOURIAN  
Jess Piper, a Maryville High School American literature teacher and an advocate for social justice, stands in front of her family’s farmhouse in Hopkins, Missouri, Aug. 12. Piper said her husband bought the house and five acres practically by accident three years ago after he “literally went out for milk.”

# Why Jess Piper Fights

ANDREW WEGLEY  
Managing Editor | @andrewwegley

HOPKINS, Mo. — The path between Maryville and the land on which Jess Piper lives stretches close to 20 miles, cutting through the vast fields of row crop and hoards of windmills that surround Missouri Route 148. There are grain silos and industrial-sized tractors among the rolling hills. There are signs for political candidates, almost none of whom are Democrats. There are more cornfields than houses, it seems. More shipping trucks pass through this stretch of Route 148 each day than there are residents with addresses on the roadway.

Between the “Randy Strong for Sheriff” signs and those promoting Gov. Mike Parson’s election campaign, there aren’t many inklings of liberal views, save for a “YES on Amendment 2” sign along one cornfield, nearly 5 miles away from Hopkins, Missouri. The same scenery persists once in the rural town of 532 residents.

The stretch of road that leads to Piper’s gravel driveway takes drivers by a Baptist church, a profane Trump sign and to a brick-red farmhouse on 5 acres of land, where bypassers might see Piper’s well-maintained flowerbed, the American flag she flies proudly, her overgrown vegetable garden or the two Joe Biden signs stuck firmly in her front lawn.

This is where Piper, an American Literature teacher at Maryville High School and an advocate for social justice, lives: in a picture-eque farmhouse near the outskirts of a conservative community where the Biden signs planted in her freshly-trimmed front yard separate her from many of her neighbors, perhaps as much as Piper’s politics do.

“I think I probably stand out because I am rural,” she said, sitting in a wooden chair underneath the shade of a tall Oak tree in her front lawn, steps away from the sidewalk, covered in grass clippings, that leads to her family’s front door. Piper tapped her right foot as she talked, flattening the grass beneath it a little more each time. She wore fashionable sandals and canary yellow toenail polish, a shade that matched her chandelier earrings and her homemade face mask. “I am, you know, not your typical liberal.”

Piper, 44, is the card-carrying, door-knocking type of Democrat who hasn’t supported a Republican presidential candidate since the first George Bush, when she was still stuck to the ideology she was taught growing up. Raised in a conservative household and brought up in Fundamental Baptist churches scattered across the South, Piper has emerged as an unlikely voice in an unlikely place.

From Louisiana to Mississippi to Arkansas, Piper has lived in the most conservative corners of some of the country’s reddest states, and now she’s helping man the pro-



ANDREW WEGLEY | NW MISSOURIAN  
Piper stands near the pasture where her family raises bulls they buy for \$50 from a dairy farmer down the road. Piper said the family is mostly self-sufficient, producing eggs, vegetables and beef on their 5-acre property.



ANDREW WEGLEY | NW MISSOURIAN  
Piper (left) protests alongside Northwest student and soccer player Emily Madden outside the Nodaway County Courthouse June 4, two days before hundreds of protesters converged on Maryville’s town square. Piper decided to protest after hearing Hayden Taylor, a former Maryville High School student, planned to protest alone outside of the courthouse after Maryville’s scheduled Black Lives Matter protests was canceled.

gressive front of a nationwide culture war in rural Nodaway County, where row crop is king and where conservatives win in land-slides and where Piper raises cattle and chickens and children and fights for what she believes in every chance she gets.

“I can’t stand back while people are actually harmed,” said Piper, who has grown increasingly vocal since casting a fruitless vote for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election. In the 43 months since President Donald Trump took office,

Piper has started carrying poster boards and sharpies in the trunk of her Volkswagen Passat, never unprepared for a protest. She’s knocked doors for candidates like Claire McCaskill and Henry Martin — both of whom lost to Republicans in 2018. Her Twitter following has grown from less than 20 to more than 8,000 as Piper speaks up, louder now than ever.

“We’ve seen policies before that could harm people,” she said, critiquing the Trump Administration’s actions and inactions, both in the last

four months and the last four years. “But this is a — it’s like purposeful to hurt people. ... It’s that weird culture war. It’s just things meant to harm other people — especially people who are already oppressed.”

Born on a military base in Louisiana to conservative parents who would later divorce, Piper grew up dirt-poor while moving across the South — the kind of poor that left Piper and her sister without food often, that left Piper behind on class field trips, that left her searching and voting for causes and candi-

dates that supported people like her. Piper grew up in the kind of poverty that made her different, she said. It made her want to fight.

But if it was poverty and hunger that lit a fire in Piper, it was Trump’s election that fanned the flame, or perhaps more accurately, doused the flame with gasoline. Piper has lived in Hopkins for three years, though the changes she’s seen since 2016 have extended far beyond the city limits of the place she calls home now and far beyond the state of Missouri.

Piper is used to conservative rhetoric, of course. But what she’s seen and heard in the 1,300-something days since Trump took office is different than what she used to see and hear.

There have been friends and even family members who Piper thought were decent people who have grown into something she doesn’t recognize, touting racist ideology and spreading views Piper isn’t really sure they even believe, she said. She has an uncle who has stopped speaking to her since Election Day 2016. Her stepfather won’t let her into her own mother’s home. She didn’t talk to her dad for much of two years.

And the rhetoric aside — although it never really is — the disconnect between Piper, a self-described moderate and sensible Democrat, and those on the other side of the aisle has only grown in the COVID-19 era. She has watched as elected leaders at the state and federal levels have been slow to action as the COVID-19 pandemic has killed more than 170,000 Americans. She’s watched Parson refuse to issue a mask mandate as cases spike in Missouri. She’s watched officials call for the reopening of schools, putting teachers like her in danger while many officials making those calls nationwide meet via Zoom.

And as she’s listened, over the last four years and the last five months, to the racist rhetoric and the misinformation, and as she’s witnessed the actions and inactions that have harmed or will harm Piper and people like her, she’s grown frustrated, both with the officials and their constituents, with politicians voting for destructive policy changes and the citizens voting for those politicians.

Living in a county that Trump carried by close to 40% in 2016, and in a congressional district he carried by 30, Piper has a question for her rural neighbors, both in a literal and figurative sense, a question that’s been growing louder and more urgent with each passing day since Nov. 8, 2016:

“I look around and think, ‘How in the world could you guys vote for these people again?’”

Twenty sixteen changed all of us. It radicalized Jess Piper.

FULL STORY ONLINE:  
[NWMISSOURINEWS.COM](https://www.missourianews.com)



**We want to be here all fall**  
**Let's all do our part**  
**Follow these tips for**  
**RESPONSIBLE Social Gatherings**



**Keep gatherings as small as possible.**



**Tell guests where they can wash or sanitize their hands, and encourage everyone to do so when they enter, before eating, and before leaving.**



**Wear a face covering and encourage your guests to, especially when you are within 6 feet of each other.**



**Ask guests to stay home if they have been exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days or are showing symptoms.**



**Entertain outside.** If gathering outside isn't feasible, open windows to make sure your indoor space is well-ventilated.



**Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing, ensuring people from different households are 6 feet apart.**



**Wave and verbally greet your guests. Don't hug, shake hands, or bump elbows or fists.**



**Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, as well as before guests arrive and after they leave.**



**Avoid games or activities where people touch the same items.**



**Avoid shared drinks and food like chips, dips and platters. Provide disposable dishes and utensils.**

# In-person classes depend on you

**ZANE CULJAT**  
Columnist  
@BoomerZane



I’m sure you’ve already seen the pictures and videos by now of parties being held off campus, bars packed like a can of sardines, all with a lack of masks and physical distancing. You name it, we’ve likely already had it around these parts. To be honest with you, it’s stupidity like this that makes me want to hop in the car and book it to a mental hospital.

All told, I truly think the countdown is on to an online-only semester like a repeat of the disaster we collectively muddled through last spring. It’s another variable in this era of seemingly incessant fluidity.

As of this writing, just over 230 cases of novel coronavirus have been confirmed in Nodaway County. Statewide, per the Show-Me Strong Recovery Plan interactive tracker, the number of COVID-19 cases reaches nearly 69,000. To make matters worse, Missouri’s positivity rate is up past 11%. For those keeping score at home, that’s enough to put the state in the so-called “red zone” for COVID-19 cases.

Anyone with a brain would likely see these figures and have enough evidence that this pandemic is far from over. Nonetheless, there are still plenty of tumbleweeds who think wearing a mask is a political statement or that physical distancing is some lost art that is proving toxic to their social lives.

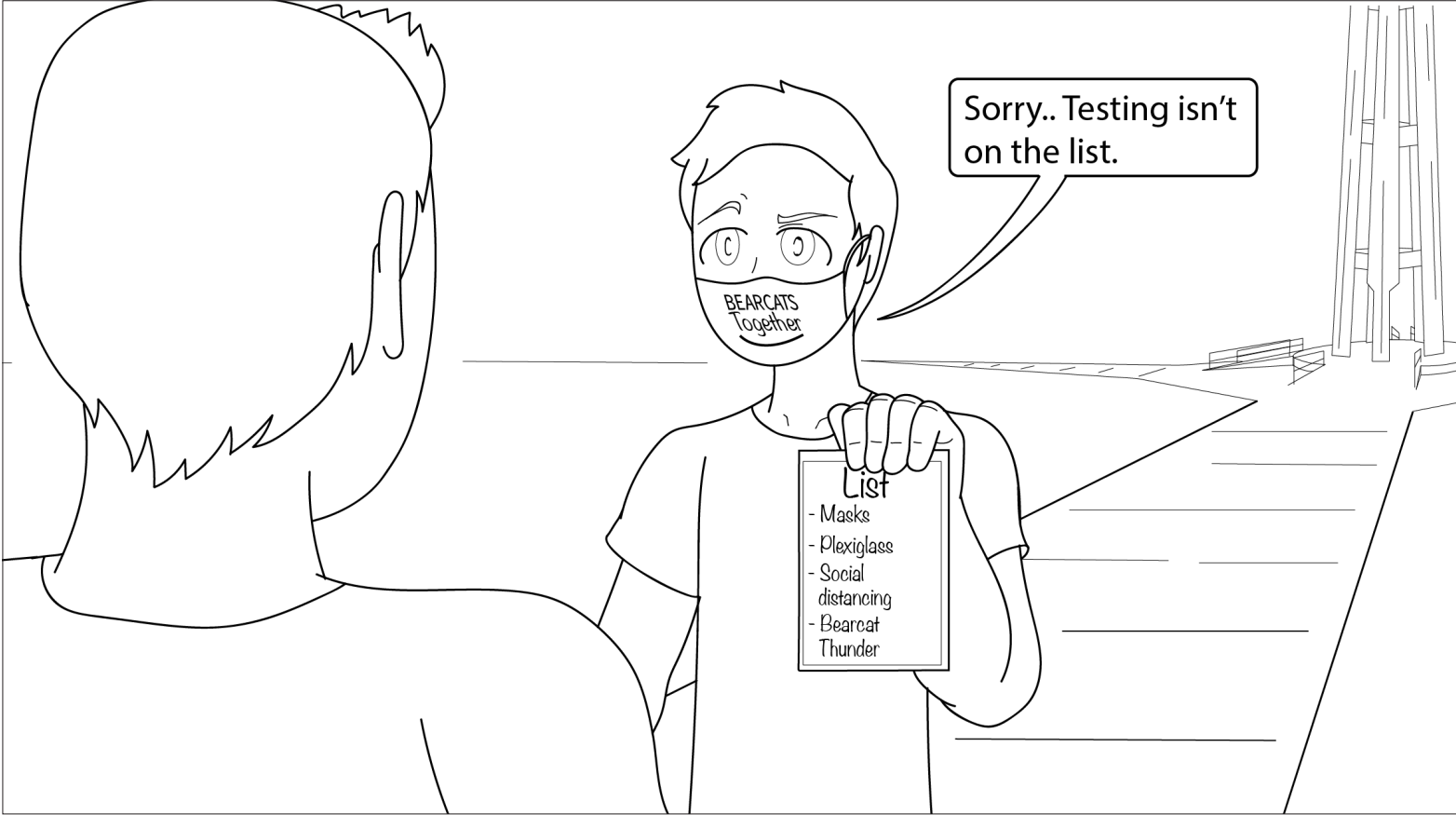
Look, I get it. We’ve all been away from our friends and instructors for five months now. Even for introverts like myself, that alone time is mentally taxing. I know you’re excited to catch up with friends and go do the things you’re used to doing on this campus or in the community. Think of coming back here as a privilege, though.

With the ability to stay here comes responsibility for each and every one of us to take precautions seriously. For that matter, it’s common decency to follow guidelines. Northwest’s administration and public health officials haven’t been asking you to wear masks and distance and wash your hands without reason.

The fight against this virus is a team effort. Wear a face covering while inside public spaces and anywhere physical separation cannot be maintained. If you feel ill, stay home and contact your primary care provider. If a contract tracer calls you and advises you to isolate for two weeks, park your butt there and do it. Remember when they taught you back in kindergarten how to properly wash your hands? Put that into use.

And, for the love of all things holy, do NOT go to the biggest party on the block just so you can be the first to catch the virus or get tanked. If you do, I guarantee you we’ll all be back to Zoom and not leaving our homes within the next month. And nobody wants that.

Remember, around 40% of coronavirus cases are completely asymptomatic. Chances are you may be a carrier and not know it, even if you’re tested and initial results show you’re negative. That silent spread could prove deadly for you and someone you love. Please — let’s be safe this fall. We’re all in this together. Let’s act like it and look out for our fellow man.



CHRIS YOUNG | NW MISSOURIAN

OUR VIEW:

# This is insane

7,000 students. One Campus. Zero tests.

What could go wrong?

Thousands of Bearcats are descending on one small town that just recorded its single-day highest number of COVID-19 positive cases. What could go wrong? The answer is a lot.

Northwest and its leadership, particularly the Northwest Leadership Team, have been put in a difficult situation of trying to continue in-person classes while following proper guidelines. However, not testing or requiring students to submit a negative coronavirus test before returning to campus is practically begging for an outbreak.

Northwest, like all other Missouri colleges, has been left on an island to make its own decisions. Missouri Gov. Mike Parson seems unwilling or unable to take charge and enforce statewide COVID-19 regulations — Missouri is one of 16 states without a mask mandate — this leaves a hodgepodge of inconsistent policies across higher education in Missouri.

UMKC is requiring all on-campus residents to submit a negative COVID-19 test before they are allowed to move into their dorms. Missouri State is requiring testing for athletes, some athletic staff, residential hall staff and anyone that has recently traveled internationally.

Northwest has fallen in line with MIAA counterparts Missouri Western and Central Missouri in not requiring any form of testing before in-person classes begin. It’s important to note that these universities are a part of the same conference that decided it was unsafe to proceed with fall sports. The leaders of the MIAA met and determined that having athletes from different areas come in close contact with each other is not safe, especially when it is unknown whether or not they have been testing for coronavirus.

Northwest didn’t require testing due to the availability of tests in Nodaway County and testing not currently being a requirement of the CDC and local health officials, said Matt Baker vice president of Student Affairs. However as the whole world has seen from the catastrophe that was the University of North Carolina, the minimum requirements aren’t enough.

UNC did not test students or faculty before returning to campus and was hit with an immediate outbreak of coronavirus after freshmen moved in, forcing them to move to online classes.

Contrary to popular belief — also known as President Donald Trump’s belief — not testing doesn’t actually result in fewer cases. It results in more exposure to people who are unaware they are infected only multiplying the likelihood of a health crisis. As of Aug. 16, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are roughly over 1,600 cases per 100,000 U.S. residents, approximately 1.6%. Using Northwest’s enrollment statistics from 2019 and CDC data, it is likely that a little over 100 students have coronavirus and many may not know it.

The feeling on campus is not if, but when, will Northwest have a surge of cases on campus forcing the school to shutter its in-person classes and move strictly to online. No mandate on testing only speeds up the timetable for that to happen.

Nobody wants to be the bad guy. Unfairly, in some situations, there has been a stigma associated with testing positive even if the person was not being negligent and caught the virus accidentally. The more virus cases that pop up on campus, the more stringent the restrictions and the closer we are to going online only. Students will feel incentivized to hide symptoms so as not to get tested and “sound the alarm.”

Ignorance is not bliss and not testing or requiring testing for students is dangerous and negligent.

Yes, the mask policies, the blended classes and “Bearcat Thunder” — cool name — are the correct measures to help mitigate the spread, but not testing or requiring students to submit negative tests is a gaping hole in the plan to make sure an outbreak is prevented on Northwest’s campus. Eventually, all of us will pay for that oversight.

YOUR VIEW:

Do you think Northwest should mandate COVID-19 testing for students taking in person classes?

**ERIN BOWERS**  
Senior  
Public Relations



“Absolutely, I think that the University should have people being tested to ensure the safety of the students, otherwise we’re just going in and assuming that, you know, that anyone that’s in the class with us either has it or doesn’t have it. We don’t know, but the University would if we actually were tested.”

**HAILEY TODD**  
Senior  
Art Education



“To a certain extent, yes. I think that in-class students should go through, maybe, a questionnaire of symptoms or check-in with Wellness Center and then have one of them with a Ph.D., like a doctor, recommend them if they need testing or not.”

**ANTONIO MORGAN**  
Junior  
Graphic Design



“I don’t think that they should mandate it because I don’t know with the money situation how, like, we probably can’t afford all that, and it would depend on, like, how often we would test. But like if we got a donation for it, I could see that working, but I don’t think that we should spend money to do that.”

# THE STROLL-Your Bearcat is drowning in hand sanitizer

Bearcat Thunder has become a staple across campus, and the name will surely be the butt of many jokes and the basis for countless memes. The gigantic, not-so-originally named hand sanitizer bottles are an equally welcome sight.

But if the disinfectant is the thunder, our hand sanitizer is undoubtedly the rain. Or more accurately, the flash flood. Those things release a full-out tsunami at

the slightest touch.

With our society’s newfound consciousness of sanitation and social distancing, the days of simply sharing hand sanitizer with a friend when you accidentally dispense too much are long gone. Instead, I’m stuck to deal with a pool of sanitizer splashing out of my hands every time I try to be proactive and hygienic.

I suppose a generous amount is better than a skimpy serving when

it comes to, you know, sanitizing. It’s just a little inconvenient when my sleeves come back drenched and there’s a puddle at my feet every time I reach for the sanitizer.

On the bright side, it’ll be good for my water and electric bill. Why shower at home when I can get a quick wash down on the way into class?

Thank you, Northwest, for not only providing hand sanitizer, but hand, forearm, bicep, shoulder

sanitizer as well. If you catch me massaging my upper arm on the way into class, it’s not because I’m sore from some intense workout; I’m simply rubbing in an overwhelming amount of hand sanitizer. Never have my elbows been so clean.

*The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of The Northwest Missourian.*

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JON WALKER | NW MISSOURIAN

# SUSPENDED.

## MIAA suspends fall sports until 2021

**JON WALKER**  
Sports Editor | @ByJonWalker

As soon as one person left, two more people stepped into the doorframe of Northwest Director of Athletics Andy Peterson’s office.

He had just answered a few questions, in which he was preparing to answer more about the news announced no more than an hour ago — until a call awaited his attention on line one.

“Do you have just a second?” Peterson asked after a deep breath.

When the phone call was over, Peterson was as ready as he was going to be to talk about the decision that was weighing on his mind for the last few weeks. And whether it was on purpose, or solely by coincidence, Peterson was wearing a black polo on the day that hopes for fall sports died.

The MIAA’s CEO Council issued a news release Friday morning to announce that all fall sports were suspended until Jan. 1, 2021.

Roughly 48 hours before the release was published, Peterson and the rest of the athletic directors among the association proposed suggestions to the council that made the final decision.

“(The NCAA) came out last week and really hammered down, and their recommendations and guidelines really became

requirements,” Peterson said. “And so, that’s kinda the straw that broke the camel’s back and got us to the point we’re at now.”

“The MIAA is taking these important actions today to help our athletic departments comply with these new NCAA membership requirements, and to assist our campuses as we continue to address this public health crisis,” Steve Scott said, the President of Pittsburg State University and chairperson of the MIAA’s CEO Council.

Peterson referenced a few alternatives that were discussed, including a possible scaled-down version of the NBA’s bubble format. None of the alternatives, Peterson said, were in the best interest of the student-athletes’ health and safety.

It’s a decision that wasn’t taken lightly at any step in the process, Peterson said. And in all, he added, the status of fall sports was the CEO Council’s choice to make, regardless of any suggestions.

“I think we uncovered and covered up every rock you could think of,” Peterson said. “Each institution is different. What I think it boiled down to at this point is being able to test athletes at the level that the NCAA is requiring isn’t feasible for most of us.”

SEE MIAA | A9

## *Dear Bearcat fans, we will be back*

**ZACH HOWARD**  
Contributing Columnist  
@ZHoward94



Confused, sad, frustrated or depressed? It is easy to think negative thoughts about the whole situation. Many of us have been playing some sort of organized football ever since we were 9 years old. And I can almost guarantee all of us had a dream of playing college football and possibly even professional.

I was 7 years old when I got my first pair of pads from my grandpa, and this year will be the first in 14 years that I won’t strap them on.

It is saddening to know that there won’t be Bearcat football this fall, and it’s heart-breaking knowing that many dreams will have to be put on hold or altered altogether throughout the nation. Like I said, it is easy to think about the negatives in all the chaos that is happening, but let’s point out a few positives.

There will be Bearcat football in the future. It sucks that it isn’t right now, but it will continue, and when it does, our mission will be the same. Another positive is that no one is losing eligibility, which

is a blessing for so many people, especially those who are trying to play at the next level.

It is a cliché saying, but one most of us have heard, “Celebrate a broken heart for that means you have experienced love.” That may not be the exact quote, but you get the idea. I think this applies to what is happening with us now.

At this moment in time, we are heart-broken there won’t be a season within the upcoming months. We are sad because the memories we have made in the past on Saturdays in the fall have been about joy and happiness. We will miss Bearcat football this fall and possibly next spring, but I thank God every day for allowing me to have experienced what I have here so far, and I’m excited for the few more years left.

I will miss so many things over the next year that I have experienced in the past, but that’s OK. Because hopefully in a years’ time, the season will be starting back up as if nothing had changed. Life will go on, and in 10 years we can look back at the year of 2020 and hopefully say that we still made memories and created experiences to look back upon.

Bearcat Nation, I love you all, and there is no place that I’d rather be.

# Volleyball leaves momentum in air amid suspension

CALVIN SILVERS  
Sports Reporter | @CalvinSilvers

On Aug. 14, the MIAA suspended all fall sports competition until Jan. 1, 2021. This left Bearcat volleyball coach Amy Woerth unable to begin her eighth year at the helm of the program.

Woerth, who led the 'Cats to the program's first back-to-back 20-win season in 2018-19, knew having a full season would be tough following the outbreak of COVID-19 cases.

"I knew the MIAA was going to work their hardest, along with our Northwest administration, to make a season happen," Woerth said. "There were some moments of hope that it would happen and that we would give it a try for sure."

This stoppage in play is coming after Northwest had a historical season. The Bearcats found themselves as high as No. 10 in the AVCA Top 25 poll in 2019, marking the highest ranking in program history.

Throughout the last three seasons, Northwest has the third-highest MIAA win totals in school history with 11 in 2017, 14 in 2018 and 13 in 2019.

Coming off a season where the Bearcats were beginning to mark their dominance, the coaching staff and players were advocating for a season. However, Woerth had no major platform to voice her opinions.

"No one asked me to be on any committees," Woerth said. "I was definitely an outsider in the process, besides talking to our administration who were at the meetings."

Even though Woerth wasn't able to decide the fate of the season, she said she knew a suspension of the season was looking highly probable as more conferences and teams were dealt the same fate across all NCAA divisions.

This suspicion helped Woerth prepare her players for the worst outcome, which ultimately came about. This early warning helped ease the player's feelings when the MIAA officially announced

the news.

"The players were aware that it was going to be difficult to get through the season," Woerth said. "I don't think it was a huge surprise to them. It's still a bummer from the standpoint of hearing it and actually having a decision, but at least a decision was made."

For some, the possibility of sports moving to the spring isn't that important. For others, they'll spend the oncoming months waiting for sports to possibly return.

For Northwest volleyball, the suspension of the season ruins the chances of a recruit catching a thrilling game at Bearcat Arena. Woerth and her staff are also not allowed to evaluate in-person due to not being able to recruit off campus.

"This hurts sealing the deal with some recruits," Woerth said. "It's always nice to have recruits at your game for sure, and it's a cool atmosphere."

For seniors Morgan Lewis, Maddy Ahrens and Hallie Sidney, this season would've been their final go-around. The NCAA has granted another year of eligibility if the season gets permanently canceled, but that decision to stay or leave is up to the players.

"I educate them and give them the information I know," Woerth said. "This isn't about me controlling them, they have to make the decision on their own. You have to respect what they think and their plans."

With four months until hearing the final fate of their season, the Bearcats are treating their free time like it's the offseason. They will work on individual development and then look to get to more team practices towards the end of the semester.

In a time where it's hard to find positives, Woerth believes this extra free time will strengthen the five incoming freshman player's abilities.

FULL STORY ONLINE:  
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**MIAA**  
CONTINUED FROM A8

"Even if the monies are there, even if we had the financial capabilities of doing it, turning around 200 tests in three days — 72 hours — would just be a big load on our infrastructure around here."

The language in the Council's release, using suspended instead of canceled, leaves room for the MIAA to explore options of moving those sports to the spring. The priority moving forward is the health and safety of student-athletes, Peterson said.

"You're just trying to do what's best for the whole," Peterson said. "First and foremost, we've gotta be in school. If we're not in school, like we saw in the spring when we had to go online, that pretty much ended everything."

The release allows for fall sports teams to continue to practice, have meetings and other out-of-season activities, as long as they comply with the NCAA's Aug. 11 policy clarification.

Still, Peterson said, an athlete having their season uprooted can alter everyday life.

"It really boils down to those 80 hours a week during the preseason, 20-plus during the regular season, countless hours on the bus ... to have all of that taken away — to have that support system taken away — but also the end goal taken away, I can't imagine," Peterson said. "I can't fathom or imagine what they're going through. I know it hurts. I know it sucks, in my seat, to try to do this in this way."

In addition to suspending fall sports, the release declared that the competition schedule for winter sports will be decided by Oct. 1 at the latest. The same winter athletes that didn't get to finish their season last school year are left questioning whether they'll see the start of their season this school year.

Peterson's attention, as it has been for the last few weeks, will continue to be on multiple things at once. Perhaps the attention will be absorbed by figuring out the logistics of fall sports being played in the spring. Perhaps the attention will be absorbed by figuring out the landscape of fall and winter sports.

It will absolutely be focused on trying to provide something for student-athletes that has been seldom


since March, Peterson said.

"We haven't given them any good news lately," Peterson said. "We understand that. We hope that we can do as much as we can together in the interim to get back to school and get some sense of normalcy academically going so that in the next few months, hopefully we can give them good news."

**“**  
**You're just trying to do what's best for the whole.”**  
**-ANDY PETERSON**

After 20 minutes of lamenting the loss of another athletics season and reflecting on the decisions that led the MIAA to this one, Peterson was done — or so he thought.

Outside of his office, which sits at the top of stairs on the upper level of Lamkin Activity Center, another person awaited Peterson's attention.



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someone must say to him: 'It is good that you exist.' --must say it, not with words, but with that act of the entire being


# k<sup>N</sup>own

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